

Joint News Release

The Infrastructure Security Partnership

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Visit The Infrastructure Security Partnership website: www.tisp.org

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Terrorist scenario exercise improves ideas for infrastructure security

WASHINGTON, DC (August 8, 2002) – How can national and local authorities access experts in infrastructure security, particularly in times of crisis? That was a key question when members of The Infrastructure Security Partnership (TISP), a post-9/11 collaboration between professional associations and federal agencies, met recently at George Mason University to role-play terrorist attack scenarios. The school's Civil Environmental and Infrastructure Engineering Department hosted the event.

While thousands of individuals and hundreds of organizations have specialized expertise in safeguarding the nation's infrastructure, finding the experts amid a myriad of commercial and federal resources remains a challenge.

Two TISP initiatives may help. One will develop a web-based matrix of skills among infrastructure security experts. It will help TISP deploy its capabilities and share information among its members. Government agencies, designers, owners, and contractors could use it to request expertise. It will be organized by hazard (such as chemical, biological, radiological, or blast), sectors (such as transportation, public works, and information), and phases over time (such as preventing and lessening damage before an attack, then response, and finally recovery).

Another initiative will be a volunteer contacts list for local authorities to tap into during a crisis. "When a crisis takes place, the first responders are local," said Henry Hatch of the Federal Facilities Council, one of TISP's founding agencies. "They need help fast and they don't have time for research."

The Infrastructure Security Partnership, formed shortly after the Sept. 11 attacks, is still in its infancy but has already grown from 11 original member groups (of both

professional associations and government agencies) to more than 100 today. The partnership facilitates interaction between the government and private sector brain trust to improve infrastructure security for the built environment -- features such as roads, ports, buildings, and the nation's water supply. The objective is to work together to respond to attacks, prevent attacks, and lessen damage and loss of life should an attack occur.

"It's going to take both government and the private sector working together to meet the challenges we face as a nation," said Robert F. Shea, Deputy Administrator of FEMA's Federal Insurance and Mitigation Administration.

Attendees of the recent workshop agreed. On the event's evaluation, one attendee said, "we must work collaboratively and proactively to influence homeland security positively, create awareness, and, above all, protect lives."

The summer workshop was designed around a "table top exercise" involving terrorist attack scenarios. Much discussion focused on how the young partnership should be organized, aligned, and made effective, and how TISP can best become a national resource for protecting built infrastructure. TISP partners currently represent more than 1.3 million firms and individuals throughout the United States.

"This was our first general membership meeting -- a way to get people together who have never met," said Hatch. "It helped people from many organizations understand what this unusual partnership is all about -- and it's not about competitive advantage -- it's about marshalling our expertise to serve Americans."

The partnership will hold its first TISP Congress on Infrastructure for the Built Environment at the Washington Convention Center in Washington, D.C., Nov. 5-7, 2002, during the American Society of Civil Engineers' 150th Civil Engineering Conference & Exhibition.

"The TISP Congress is a landmark event bringing together the expertise, experience and dedication of the engineering, design and construction industry to address one of the most serious threats our nation has ever faced," said Dwight Beranek of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, current TISP Chair. For more information on TISP and this event, visit www.tisp.org.

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